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DE RUCNDT #0668/01 2072253  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 252253Z JUL 08  
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4691  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 000668

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL LOOKS TO GET ACTIVE ON SOMALIA

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In consultations on July 23, several Security Council members echoed the U.S.'s call for a more detailed briefing from DPKO on peacekeeping scenarios by August 15. Council members voiced concern over the size, mandate and composition of a potential force, and the options presented by DPKO in its upcoming briefing will likely shape Council members' thinking going forward. Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Somalia, Ahmed Ould Abdallah, AU Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra and Somali Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Jana briefed the Council, and were unanimous that the Council should authorize an international security force to seize the opportunity presented by political progress in Somalia. End Summary.

¶2. (U) In an open briefing on July 23, SRSG Ould Abdallah called on the Council to take "bold, decisive and fast action" to show its commitment to improving the situation in Somalia. The SRSG argued that increased international security assistance was essential in order for the humanitarian situation to improve. Ould Abdallah praised the Djibouti Agreement between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the opposition Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS), signed in Djibouti on June 9, 2008 and singled out the Security Council's visit to Djibouti as "one of the most important contributions" that convinced the parties to commit to a negotiated solution. He proposed that the international community seize the opening provided by the Agreement to approve a new international security force, which he said would help marginalize groups that refused to renounce violence. The SRSG also urged the Council to review UNSC sanctions lists and with a view to delisting leaders who had committed themselves to peace.

Council members speak out in support of UN action:

¶3. (SBU) In closed consultations Ambassador Khalilzad framed the debate by stating that the United States supports the Somali PM's call for a UN force and asking for further input from DPKO on security assistance scenarios by August 15. Other delegations seconded this suggestion, with the Chinese representative stating that his government "fully shares" the U.S. view and looks forward to seeing a workable plan from the Secretariat to capitalize on the political success of the Djibouti Agreement. Italy spoke in support of AMISOM's rehatting as a UNPKO with an initial focus on Mogadishu. Italy said it would be important to hear from DPKO before the beginning of AMISOM renewal negotiations and stated that only a UNPKO could encourage NGOs to return to Somalia.

¶4. (SBU) Libya encouraged the Council to respond to the AU's call for a UNPKO and urged planning now so that AMISOM could be enhanced and folded "seamlessly" into a PKO when the time was right. Burkina Faso stressed that the UN's credibility in Africa was at stake, urging the Council to "urgently" take over AMISOM and "immediately" deploy a UNPKO in order to

exploit the opportunity created by the political process. South Africa spoke in favor of a force that would allow Ethiopian troops to withdraw, but emphasized that careful planning was necessary. Vietnam advocated early deployment of a UNPKO while Costa Rica said that the international community should assume its responsibilities by authorizing an international security force.

Europeans wary of UNAMID repeat:  
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15. (SBU) Other delegations were more cautious in their statements, though none ruled out the possibility of an international force. The UK lamented that Somalia had for too long languished in the UN's "too-difficult tray," but cautioned that the current situation of political progress amid increasing instability did not bode well for an increased UN presence on the ground. The UK stressed the need for realism, saying that on Somalia, the Council needed "serious military advice of the type we lacked on UNAMID." Any peace force would be intended to replace the Ethiopians, the UK Ambassador said, and should be equipped for the type of counter-insurgency fight the Ethiopians are now waging. France said that it could support an international stabilization force under UN mandate, but that a full-fledged PKO would need careful planning from DPKO. The French indicated that one possibility they could support would be an operation with a "geographically limited mandate" focusing on the Mogadishu region and aimed at restoring a UNDP presence in Somalia.

16. (SBU) Russia said that it was important to consider the

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AU's request and to prevent a potential security vacuum following the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops, but stressed that the parameters and configuration of a potential PKO needed to be carefully considered. Indonesia, occasionally mentioned as a potential troop contributing country for a Somalia operation, said that the AU's request should be urgently considered, but that careful planning would be required, including the identification of potential troop contributors. Indonesia went on to say that AMISOM should remain at the core of any future force. Croatia supported a "measured and gradual" approach to a stabilization force, while the Belgian ambassador quoted the Secretary-General's report as stating that deployment of a stabilization force would only be possible if the Djibouti Agreement were implemented seriously.

17. (SBU) The SRSG responded to Council statements, expressing his concern that "Somalia is being punished for the misbehavior of its leaders in the 1990s" as well as his belief that the Djibouti Agreement represents real political progress reflective of the will of the overwhelming majority of Somalis. He said he was skeptical of DPKO's planning, particularly in light of its estimate that a PKO could require 28,000 peacekeepers, saying that such numbers were designed to "scare the Council." Ould Abdallah also gave his private opinion that the international community had for too long prioritized humanitarian assistance to Somalia while neglecting the security situation. The dirty secret of humanitarian aid, he said, is that no NGO can deliver aid in Somalia without paying warlords for protection. Thus, money given for aid is ultimately used to buy weapons and sustain the power of the warlords in Somalia. The SRSG said that international security assistance would be necessary in order to break this cycle, stabilize the security situation and allow political progress to take root.

Somali, AU push the Council forward:  
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18. (U) In the Council's open briefing, AU Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra echoed Ould Abdallah's call for the Council to seize the window of opportunity offered by the

Djibouti Agreement to authorize a PKO. Failure to do so could allow spoilers to undermine progress, he said. To emphasize the opportunity offered by the agreement, Lamamra drew attention to the fact that two members of the ARS were included in the Somali delegation on the Council floor. While praising AMISOM for its recent force generation successes, Lamamra described it as grossly inadequate to the challenge at hand. He called for a UN takeover of AMISOM to allow the focus of the operation to extend beyond Mogadishu, including a strong naval component to project power and safeguard aid shipments.

19. (U) The Somali Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Jana also gave a short briefing, in which he reminded members that the UNSC had been "seized of" the situation in Somalia since early 1992 and expressed the hope that the cause of a UNPKO for Somalia would receive "a major push" at this meeting. In light of the unprecedented reconciliation of the Djibouti Agreement, Jana said that all parties in Somalia were now in agreement that a UN authorized stabilization force was the best hope of the Somali people's 17-year suffering coming to an end. Jana took noted exception to DPKO's projections, claiming that the 26,000-strong force proposed by the department was "not feasible or necessary." The FM told the council that a much smaller force could be effective in reasonable circumstances, and that AMISOM should be the nucleus of any future force.

Khalilzad